



The Russia-Ukraine War, Security in Europe and European Defence



by Alessandro Marrone et al.

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Contents

1. Ukraine's Counteroffensive and Scenarios for the War by Alessandro Marrone	4
2. The Space Front in the War in Ukraine by Giancarlo La Rocca	8
3. The Dual Nuclear Threat Facing Ukraine by Paola Tessari	12
4. Russia in the Mediterranean: A Threat? by Michelangelo Freyrie	15
5. Sweden and Finland in NATO: A Step Forward in the Baltic, but Not All That Glitters Is Gold by Karolina Muti	17
6. Where the NATO Compass Points by Elio Calcagno	22
7. Three Ways to Achieve a European Political Community by Nicoletta Pirozzi	25
8. The Risks to European Defence of Non-coordination by Michele Nones	29
9. Where Italy Invests on Defence by Ottavia Credi	33
10. Conclusions – Where Is European Security Going? by Alessandro Marrone	37
Acronyms	41

1. Ukraine's Counteroffensive and Scenarios for the War

by Alessandro Marrone

The success of the Ukrainian counteroffensive underway since September, due to various lasting factors, changes the future scenario for the conflict in favour of Kyiv, and creates difficulties for Putin.

In the last two months, Ukrainian forces have achieved significant success in the Northeast – liberating the entire area around Kharkiv and conquering the important logistics hub of Lyman – and in the South, where they have liberated Kherson. This first success is important because it entails three results: the definitive securing of Kharkiv; a stop to the Russian advance in the Donbas; and pressure on the provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk, that Moscow will be required to defend by placing scarce troops there. The liberation of Kherson is even more important for two other reasons. Firstly, it is the only Ukrainian regional capital conquered by Russia since the beginning of the invasion, and its liberation marks a political-symbolic checkmate for Putin given the Kremlin's emphasis on annexation via sham referenda, and conversely a galvanising victory for Ukrainian morale. Secondly, in military terms the capture of the city allows for the threat of Russian control over the rest of the namesake region and Crimea, both by controlling a portion of the territory's water supplies still occupied and by placing Russian lines in range of Ukrainian weapons systems. Kyiv's counteroffensive exploits factors of weakness in the invading forces that have been confirmed by the latest developments and were already evident months ago in military and strategic analysis free of Russian propaganda and cognitive bias.

From the outset, in September the mobilisation of 300,000 conscripts confirmed the insufficiency of the initial contingent of only 190,000 troops to occupy a country of 44 million inhabitants, hundreds of thousands of whom have military experience, who are fighting for and in their own country, and

thus know the territory and have the support of the local population.

It is difficult for the mobilisation of conscripts without recent military experience to succeed in offsetting the losses suffered by Russia, because the new recruits will lack adequate training. This regards both officers and specialised units such as those for helicopters, tanks and complex weapons systems, and also infantry, that in modern Western armies is normally trained for months before being deployed to theatres of operations. The tragic end of the conscripts thrown to the front at Lyman just a few weeks after the draft shows how little impact the new reinforcements have.

In addition to insufficient training there is the low and deteriorating morale among Russian troops, an inevitable phenomenon after nine months of bloody war initially presented as a blitz to be completed in just a few weeks, and especially after the loss of the territories conquered previously or episodes such as the sinking of the flagship Moskva in the Black Sea. The forced succession among Russian military commanders certainly does not help morale, nor does the lack of support from the Ukrainian population in the occupied areas who do speak the Russian language, but this has not made them favourable to Russia.

The forced deportation of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including tens of thousands of children, is a tragic and vile example of how much active or passive resistance Russian soldiers have encountered in the territories that the Kremlin expected would welcome them as liberators.

While prepared and motivated human resources are scarce in structural terms, the Russian situation regarding equipment is also serious and deteriorating, and difficult to resolve. Suffice it to consider that in the initial days of the conflict Russia used over 160 missiles, but in subsequent months it has launched an average of only 10–15 a day. The stocks of high-technology munitions have run out, those of obsolete weapons are being consumed, and despite being pushed to the maximum level possible, production capacity has limits due to sanctions, structural inefficiencies and endemic corruption.¹

¹ Michelangelo Freyrie, "Costi e sconfitte della nuova mobilitazione russa", in *Affari Internazionali*, 6 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100371>.

In other words, the Russian war industry can sustain this level of conflict for a long time yet, but is unlikely to be able to sustain the quantitative and qualitative leap needed to adequately arm the new units to be (re)formed with 300,000 conscripts.

Russian logistics is also struggling under the blows of the Ukrainian offensive, from Lyman to the bridges over the Dnieper, while Kiev is succeeding in limiting the damage from Russian missiles thanks to the air defence systems supplied by North America and Europe. Overall, in the spring Moscow was indeed prepared for a long war,² but perhaps not adequately prepared for a conflict in which Western support for Ukraine could lead to offensives and inflict losses like those of the last few weeks. So, what are the future scenarios for the conflict? The four suggested in *AffarInternazionali* in April³ are still valid in principle, provided that nuclear escalation⁴ remains a remote option and that the West continues to support Kyiv militarily and sanction Moscow.

The first scenario involves a war of attrition that continues with offensives and counteroffensives by both sides, limited changes to the front line but without major shifts: on the one hand Odesa and Kharkiv remain secure, while on the other Crimea remains firmly in Russian hands.

The second scenario foreshadows a low-intensity conflict, although not exactly a frozen one, without a peace treaty but with a sort of de facto militarised border: Russia would occupy more of Ukraine than it did on 24 February, with full control of the Azov Sea coast, while Kyiv would maintain access to the Black Sea through the Odesa region.

The third scenario sees Ukraine retaking the territories occupied after 24 February, particularly in the Donbass. Finally, the fourth – that was unlikely as far back as April – would involve a new overwhelming Russian advance.

² Alessandro Marrone, “La guerra lunga e l’inverno in arrivo per l’Europa”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 21 July 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99480>.

³ Alessandro Marrone, “Due mesi di guerra in Ucraina: quattro scenari possibili”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 25 April 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=97475>.

⁴ Alessandro Marrone, “La guerra lunga e l’inverno in arrivo per l’Europa”, cit.

The fundamental variant was and remains the relationship of strength between the two parties on the battlefield, considering both material factors (equipment, supplies, logistics) and immaterial factors (training, morale, leadership, strategy, deployment doctrine and tactics). Since the factors analysed above and the developments of past weeks move the needle in favour of Ukraine in a fairly lasting manner, the level of probability of each scenario changes. In fact, while a strong Russian advance is currently almost impossible, the reconquest by Ukraine of all of the territories occupied by Moscow after 24 February is now less unlikely than it was a few months ago.

Nine months of conflict have demonstrated how much attention and caution is needed in distinguishing tactical victories and defeats from strategic developments, in assessing different factors and considering future scenarios. War is a complex and tragic phenomenon, whose characteristics change while its nature does not, as Clausewitz explained two centuries ago, making each conflict unique.

For now, the Ukrainian advance demonstrates, once again, not only how correct but also useful it was for America, Europe and Italy to send arms and equipment to Kyiv, because those supplies have made it possible to stop the Russian advance and then liberate territories and save the civilian population from the yoke of the occupier. In other words, as written in *AffariInternazionali* on 25 February,⁵ it was and is “arduous to guess how, to what extent and for how long Russia will succeed in controlling all or most of Ukraine”. In this war a just peace was and is possible, that does not entail surrender to the invader.

Translation of: “La controffensiva ucraina e gli scenari della guerra”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 7 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100505>.

⁵ Alessandro Marrone, “Ucraina: come cambia la strategia militare Nato”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 25 February 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=95297>.

2. The Space Front in the War in Ukraine

by Giancarlo La Rocca

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was prepared and accompanied by two actions: a cyber-attack on the land segment of Viasat, a US provider of satellite communications, and a vast operation to disturb signals of positioning, time and navigation.

The first action saw the implementation of a typical attack in multi-domain operations, that through the cyber domain hit space, disabling the communications terminals present in the territory and damaging the command and control capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces, for which Viasat is a service provider.

The second action affected the precision of the GPS and Galileo signals on the border and along Russia's offensive lines, but interference and disturbances were also detected from the Black Sea to the Baltic in the direction of Kaliningrad, with repercussions on civil aviation as well.

Space satellites and infrastructure are contributing to reporting on the war, creating an almost real-time dynamic as never before in the past. Through satellite images the conflict can be explained, verified and made as transparent as possible, whether confirming details of operations and losses suffered by the parties, or identifying the horrors perpetrated by Russian forces.

In some cases, spatial intelligence informs the actors involved, attempting to anticipate enemy strategies and tactics. This happened at the start of the invasion, with the sharing of images of Russian columns on the Ukrainian border, to the point of revealing the intentions of the offensive in the case of images of mass graves dug well before unleashing massacres of civilians.

The war has thus opened a front in space, for the first time on such a large scale after the first examples in the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Syria. Space assets are an active and passive part of the conflict: intelligence agents, essential services for defence, but also targets of the offensive. The space front of the conflict has a dual nature: on the one hand, there is the strategic opening of the new domain¹ and the utilisation of the communications, geo-intelligence and navigation services necessary to make operations effective and provide new instruments to forces in the field. On the other, there are the repercussions on the space sector, deriving also from the response of the Western community in implementing sanctions against Russia.

The attack on Viasat and the spoofing operations of positioning signals (necessary also for remote-controlled munitions) were only the first and most evident actions of an expansion of the conflict to the fifth domain. After the attack on satellite communications and ground infrastructure, the Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Mykhailo Fedorovha requested help from all of the commercial actors able to provide a timely solution to the disruption underway.

A response to the government's request came from SpaceX, that in 48 hours – thanks to the start of cooperation prior to the war – completed the first shipment of terminals to connect Ukrainian actors to the Starlink low-orbit constellation. This was a rapid response that was also affected by Russian attacks attempting to disable the services, which were followed by upgrades by SpaceX to increase the cybernetic defence of the space assets. The connections to Starlink themselves were targeted by Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) manoeuvres to intercept and localise the users of the ultrafast connection service. The involvement of SpaceX and Starlink in a conflict is a first for the space domain, also with regard to the Pentagon, which is extremely interested in the same technologies in other theatres southwards of but including the Arctic, where those services have been tested and are highly in demand.

The Ukrainian government's requests to the space community also pertained the services for earth observation and geo-intelligence, which were answered by both commercial and institutional actors. The European Satellite Centre

¹ Giancarlo La Rocca and Alessandro Marrone, "Spazio: nuove strategie per la difesa italiana in Europa", in *Affari Internazionali*, 17 February 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=95022>.

(SatCen) was mobilised immediately by the High Representative Joseph Borrell to provide data and images to the Ukrainian forces.

Finally, it should be stressed that the flourishing Ukrainian aerospace sector has been damaged by the Russian offensive, both with regard to the manufacturing industry and the Yuzmash company, that has direct relations with the European space industry, in particular for some components of the Italian Vega launcher, that for Ukrainian space startups – some of which are in close contact with the industrial fabric in Italy – and due to the destruction of the factory that produces Antonov cargo planes, are indispensable for the transport of satellites to launch sites.

The space front is also characterised by industrial and technological cooperation, which in many cases has been interrupted. Sanctions have a direct impact on the Russian space sector, and an indirect one for the rest of the world. Russia has withdrawn its technical personnel from the European site of Kourou in French Guyana, preventing the launch of the Soyuz carrier by Arianespace and blocking two Galileo launches of strategic importance for Europe. Russia also ended relations with OneWeb, a company that was planning launches from the Baikonur site in Kazakhstan. And it is impossible to continue with scientific cooperation between ESA and Roscosmos, with the stoppage of the ExoMars mission that has very likely been postponed by at least four years. The arguments and conflicts have also reached orbit, the International Space Station, where despite Russian provocations operations continue regularly.

In any event, it can be expected that Western sanctions will have a non-negligible impact on the Russian space budget, considering that in 2014 – following much more limited sanctions due to the invasion of Crimea – Putin was forced to cut investments in the national space programme by 50 per cent. It is also necessary to assess the medium and long-term effects on the Russian industry's ability to be present on the space market, in terms of both hard capabilities – orders of satellites from the Middle East to Africa and Asia – and soft power – the attractiveness of Russian human space flight programmes. On these fronts, Europe must show that it is ready, and the strategic implications

foreseen in the space field by the Strategic Compass² must be enhanced by a serious, full spectrum reflection on strategic autonomy, finding support in terms of political will and investments from the member states.

Translation of: “Il fronte spaziale della guerra in Ucraina”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 27 May 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98311>.

² Alessandro Marrone, “Una Bussola per l’Europa della difesa”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 22 March 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=95894>.

3. The Dual Nuclear Threat Facing Ukraine

by Paola Tessari

The worsening of the conflict in Ukraine has brought the nuclear risk to the forefront. Two different dimensions of that risk are at the centre of international attention: on the one hand, the possible use of an atomic bomb by Russia, evoked on multiple occasions by its leaders, and on the other, the threats regarding the safety of nuclear power plants, made more acute by the recent series of explosions that occurred near the Zaporizhzhia plant, apparently caused by mines, between August and October 2022.

The Kremlin's repeated statements on the possible use of nuclear weapons – the latest came from Putin on the occasion of the ceremony for the new annexations – have provoked comments and reflections¹ on the differences between “tactical” and “strategic” nuclear weapons. One of the most heavily debated issues is which of the two represents the most concrete threat. Tactical nuclear weapons are defined as those with short range, i.e. that can be carried by missiles able to hit targets at a maximum distance of 500 kilometres.² These are weapons destined to be used in limited combat, being small (compared to strategic weapons) and thus less powerful; they can reach 50 kilotons, though, with effects even more devastating than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima (which was 15 kilotons). Tactical nuclear weapons can be used on military or civilian targets, or also symbolic ones.

Strategic weapons are larger and can be launched from distances exceeding 500 km. They allow for hitting targets far from the battlefield, that are of

¹ Cesare Merlini, “Come affrontare lo scenario nucleare”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 5 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100402>.

² Manuel Herrera, “I missili di Kim minacciano la sicurezza internazionale”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 6 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100496>.

fundamental importance for the enemy's capabilities, jeopardising their very survival. Despite differences in terms of dimensions and yield, it should not be thought that one type is less dangerous than the other. The explosion of a nuclear bomb would in any event have immediate and multiple destructive effects that go from the heat wave with very high temperatures to a very powerful shock wave. These initial effects would be followed by the release of radiation in various forms, all in very rapid sequence and with an extensive range of action. Fallout would follow, with the spread of radioactive material and dust, that would amplify the effects of the explosion by bringing contamination to even wider areas.

The nuclear threat in the Ukrainian conflict also has another dimension, that of the safety of power plants. Bombardment in the vicinity of the country's large nuclear power plants has increased the risk of a nuclear accident. In this case, a "nuclear incident" is understood as being any incident happening in this type of installation – from the reactor to the material during transportation or storage – that can entail the release of radioactive substances. It is a substantially different event than an explosion of a nuclear bomb against the forces of an enemy country: the release of radioactive substances would take place following an incident at the plant. The causes could be accidental or intentional, with different effects depending on the type of material used, the point of release and the rapidity with which the effects are shown.

Experts³ have explained that reactor infrastructure is among the most resistant there is to external events, whether accidental or intentional, including heavy artillery attacks. In the case of Ukrainian nuclear power plants, the repeated bombing of the surrounding areas caused worries not so much due to possible physical damage to the structures, but because it caused the interruption of the electricity needed to maintain the cooling of the plant and the pools that hold the spent fuel; a situation similar to that of the Fukushima accident in Japan. If an accident were to take place with the release of radioactive substances, it would be essential to maintain the monitoring of radiation levels in the area. This function is guaranteed by a detection system that also depends on a constant and adequate supply of electricity. The fact that this supply is in

³ Alessandro Pascolini, "Ripristinare la sicurezza a Zaporizhzhia", in *AffariInternazionali*, 1 September 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99846>.

danger due to the conflict thus represents another reason for apprehension.

Definitively ensuring the safety of the Zaporizhzhia power plant remains a priority for the entire international community and in the repeated visits by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to Kyiv and Moscow demonstrates the willingness to restore some minimum safety standards.

Translation of: "La doppia minaccia nucleare che grava sull'Ucraina", in *AffariInternazionali*, 10 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100557>.

4. Russia in the Mediterranean: A Threat?

by Michelangelo Freyrie

In June 2022, there was a certain level of alarm in Italy regarding the manoeuvres carried out by the Russian Navy (*Voyenno-Morskoi Flot*, VMF) in the Mediterranean basin. Some ships were identified off the coast of the Italian peninsula, while others seemed to be engaged in exercises and in tailing the NATO naval task force passing through the basin.

Clearly, the reactivation in 2013 of the VMF's Fifth operational squadron in the Syrian port of Tartus caused some worries in Italy and the rest of the Atlantic Alliance. The invasion of Ukraine further increased tensions, and the Russian presence in the Mediterranean actually grew along with the deployment of Moscow's ships in the Black Sea (now blocked due the closing of the Dardanelles Strait to outside military ships with bases in other ports). Two Slava-class cruisers have been added to the Fifth squadron (the Varyag coming from the Pacific and the Marshal Ustinov from the North Sea). Overall, Moscow deploys more than nine naval assets in the region: two Kilo-class submarines, two Udaloy-class torpedo-boat destroyers, two Gorshkov-class and Grigorovich-class frigates and some auxiliary ships.

In May 2021, then Navy Chief of Staff Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, currently head of the Italian Joint Chiefs of Staff, had already spoken of the need to increase Italy's capacity to project strength in the Mediterranean, and in particular of the possibility, if necessary, to penetrate the defences of possible new Russian bases in Libya¹ and Syria. The fear is that the Russians could impose what are known as Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) "bubbles", i.e. zones heavily defended by anti-aircraft and anti-ship systems able to interdict large adjacent

¹ Francesco Semprini, "Libia: il ritorno di un Gheddafi e i rischi del voto", in *AffariInternazionali*, 29 November 2021, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=92588>.

areas – or at least inflict harsh losses to incoming fleets – and thus make allied navigation in the Mediterranean difficult. This risk may be present, but it is not the only one. The Russians also have the desire to maintain a military presence in a region that is crucial for international maritime trade, for reasons of pure political prestige.

In Russian strategic thinking, the greatest danger coming from the United States and NATO² is the ability to launch lightning attacks, both nuclear and conventional. This has led Moscow to study ways to guarantee the survival of their ships and maintain attack options with which, if necessary, to damage NATO's strategic infrastructure at a distance, especially with non-nuclear means. In addition, Russian military strategists have often worriedly stressed that the development of new technologies, especially missiles, will make it increasingly easy for the West to precisely hit targets deep inside Russian territory. This leads to two needs: to have the ability to engage NATO fleets as far as possible from the Black Sea,³ and to maintain a missile capability able to strike NATO's southern flank. Observing the composition of the Fifth Squadron, we can guess that the Russian presence in the Mediterranean was useful above all to conduct a mission of deterrence, more than seriously challenge Western naval supremacy. This is also due to the considerable difficulties Russia had in launching the new vessels, due to its industry being strangled by international sanctions and the obsolescence of its naval shipyards. A new military doctrine was adapted as a consequence, foreseeing a massive use of the naval missile capabilities and seeking to maximise the firepower of existing systems.

Again, it is necessary to delve onto a technical level to try to interpret the Russian strategy. The adoption of the Kalibr cruise missile, in particular, makes the Mediterranean fleet a potential danger for civilian and military infrastructure on NATO's southern flank. With a range of between 1,500 and 2,500 kilometres, these weapons represent the principal instrument with which the VMF succeeded in increasing the firepower of its ships. Not all the ships in

² Alessandro Marrone, "Gli equilibri tra Nato e Russia dopo tre mesi di guerra in Ucraina", in *Affari Internazionali*, 24 May 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98251>.

³ Fabio Caffio, "Il Mar Nero, la guerra, il diritto", in *Affari Internazionali*, 30 May 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98354>.

the Fifth squadron have completed the installation of the necessary launchers, but overall the formation seems to be among the most modern in the Russian navy. A telling detail: the two Slava-class cruisers are said to have received the updates that some time ago had been denied to their twin the Moskva, sunk in April in spectacular fashion in the Black Sea. This could indicate that the Russian command takes seriously the possibility that the fifth squadron may have to face naval combat missions.

Finally, it should also be recalled that investments in missile capabilities include the development of hypersonic missiles, further complicating the picture of threats to which NATO's missile defences must respond.⁴ Here as well, the deeper value of these systems lies in their deterrence value, both against ground targets and to make navigation difficult for Western task forces towards the Black Sea. Ultimately, the Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean should not be underestimated, even if it is above all a tool for deterrence. In the remote case of a conflict between Moscow and NATO, the VMF would probably seek above all to strike allied infrastructure in the region and disturb Western manoeuvres in the basin using its own missile capabilities. That said, Russia's structural weaknesses make it difficult for Moscow to challenge Western naval supremacy.

Translation of: "La Russia nel Mediterraneo: una minaccia?", in *Affari Internazionali*, 29 June 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99059>.

⁴ Alessandro Marrone and Karolina Muti (eds), "Europe's Missile Defence and Italy: Capabilities and Cooperation", in *Documenti IAI*, No. 21|05 (April 2022), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/13072>.

5. Sweden and Finland in NATO: A Step Forward in the Baltic, but Not All That Glitters Is Gold

by Karolina Muti

If we were to look at the potential for Sweden and Finland to join NATO as a game of Risk, the decision by these two countries to request entry into the Atlantic Alliance could easily be considered as a clear geopolitical victory. Map in hand, the Baltic would in fact become almost a “NATO sea”, as already noted by some observers.¹ The participation of Helsinki and Stockholm would expand the territory of the Atlantic Alliance and considerably increase its protection to the northeast, reassuring the Baltic countries and Poland and at the same time eliminating the “buffer zone” between NATO and Moscow formed by countries that are not militarily aligned. These are in part strategic territories, as in the case of the Swedish island of Gotland in the middle of the Baltic Sea, long contested because it is fundamental as a base from which to conduct potential operations via land, sea, or air.

It has also been pointed out that, from a morphological standpoint, the long Russia-Finland border consists of wide regions of lakes, with few roads mostly unsuitable for the potential deployment and passage of trucks and armoured vehicles, thus reducing the risk of a ground attack by Moscow.

In terms of capabilities, Finland and Sweden could provide a contribution to air defence, as Helsinki has recently decided to purchase 64 F-35 fighter jets. Finland is also one of the few countries that has maintained conscription, thus guaranteeing even to a country with limited population an important, well-trained reserve. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the support of Swedish and Finnish citizens for national defence, also established by the Finnish

¹ Giulia Belardinelli, “Il Baltico diventerà un bastione Nato. Uno smacco per Putin. Perché l’ingresso di Finlandia e Svezia fa così male alla Russia”, in *Huffington Post*, 15 April 2022, https://www.huffingtonpost.it/esteri/2022/04/15/news/finlandia_nato-9190895.

constitution, grew even more within the framework of the “comprehensive defence” doctrine, which aims to involve society in defence of the country. At the same time, given the well-known attempts to destabilise the democracies and societies of EU and NATO countries through hybrid threats, first of all against the countries of the former Warsaw Pact, it is no coincidence that the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats is located in Helsinki,² where it was founded through a cooperative initiative of nine EU and NATO countries. The allies could also be inspired by the Finnish model pertaining the adoption of *curricula* of media literacy in schools, which aim at increasing society’s resilience to disinformation fomented by Moscow.

Moreover, the two countries already cooperate in various forms, both with each other and with NATO, with which they regularly conduct exercises with an excellent level of interoperability in terms of equipment and that of national armed forces with those of the allies. The solid values of the Swedish and Finnish democracies are also undisputable, a necessary requirement to enter the Alliance, alongside those of a military, legal, economic and political nature. These are the factors that drove Secretary General Stoltenberg to argue that the procedure for accession of Finland and Sweden will be brief and only last a few months. This is even more significant in light of the fact that over time the membership procedure, originally expressed in Article 10 of the Treaty of Washington,³ has become more gradual and complex, and that for the latest “neo-allies” – Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020) it took an average of 10 years.

Sweden and Finland would also bring an experience and knowledge of the region that could turn out to be precious for NATO’s projection, for example in the Arctic. In short, the two Nordic countries could make many contributions, but not everything that glitters is gold. Despite a process likely to be brief, there are various institutional steps that require the unanimous consent of the 30 member states of the Alliance.

² HybridCoE website: *About Us*, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/about-us>.

³ NATO, *The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington, 4 April 1949, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

The procedure entails a formal request, a phase of preliminary discussion with the allies, the “Accession Talks” for final confirmation, the “Membership Action Plan”, and finally, the ratification and signature of the Accession Protocol of the candidate country by all of the allies and the formal invitation from the Secretary General. These steps could be delayed and suffer from obstructionism on the part of some allies, ready to use their approval of Finnish and Swedish membership as a negotiating card to obtain benefits on other fronts. This attitude has already been seen in the case of Turkey.

The aggression against Ukraine is turning into a boomerang for the Russian government from every point of view. The rapid change in views in Helsinki and Stockholm, able to upend over half a century of foreign and security policy in a just a few months, provides definitive proof. Nevertheless, there is no need to confuse the convenience of Sweden and Finland’s membership and the military and political benefits that the new allies, and like the Alliance as well, will derive with an automatic guarantee of greater security of NATO. Since it is not a game of Risk, simplifications are to be avoided: the expansion and strengthening of NATO in the Northeast does not necessarily imply greater security guarantees for Europe, or at least is not sufficient.

Organising to guarantee deterrence and collective defence in new and vast territories will be a process that will last years, with a centre of gravity, attention and resources of the Alliance that inevitably will shift to the Northeast, dissatisfying someone in the South, despite the fact that Russia itself has operated there for years, effectively extending its influence. It will not be easy to achieve an equilibrium which, on one hand, achieves a process of integration in the decisional structures and in the deterrence and defence architecture of NATO, while on the other also avoids the militarisation of the north-eastern territories. This would increase the risk of an uncontrolled escalation in what will be the longest border between NATO and Russia.

Potential border accidents would, de facto, involve both NATO and Russia directly, with consequences that could be unpredictable, including in light of the unstable international picture and technological developments escaping existing non-proliferation and arms control agreements. Sweden and Finland, in addition to benefitting from the protective umbrella of NATO, will also have to contribute and adopt the perspective that, from now on, they will

be protectors of the border of the entire Alliance, not only of their national borders. Great caution will be required to adequately manage this shift, that – if it actually takes place – will add complexity to relations with Moscow. From a medium to long-term perspective, the United States' Pivot to Asia will remain;⁴ Europe will thus have the task of guaranteeing security in Europe and taking responsibility for the future “new” border between NATO and Russia.

Translation of: “Svezia e Finlandia nella Nato: scacco sul Baltico, ma non è tutto oro quel che luccica”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 1 giugno 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98416>.

⁴ David Sacks, “Don’t Pivot from the Pivot to Asia”, in *CFR Asia Unbound*, 21 March 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/dont-pivot-pivot-asia>.

6. Where the NATO Compass Points

by Elio Calcagno

On June 30, the NATO Summit ended in Madrid, dropping the curtain on a jam-packed agenda full of key points. First of all, the Alliance's new Strategic Concept,¹ but also the invitation to Sweden and Finland to join and the drama of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. From the summit, that was historic from various points of view,² an Alliance emerged that is convinced of facing the complex challenges deriving from Russian aggression and the inexorable advance of China on the global chessboard. On the one hand, today's NATO has a strategic vision with increasingly global horizons to reckon with Beijing, while on the other it has recalibrated the principal geographic focus on its efforts towards Eastern Europe.

The twelve years that have passed since the adoption of the previous Strategic Concept in Lisbon³ have brought enormous changes internationally, including the substantial weakening of the liberal order, the shift of the economic centre of gravity towards Asia, the rise of China, the pandemic and the return of war in Europe. Called on to define a path consistent with a world that in many ways is different than that of 2010, today the Atlantic Alliance must attempt to maintain a difficult balance between new challenges, such as the increased influence and assertiveness of China and the instability caused by climate change, and now long-term challenges such as international terrorism. Russian expansionism, which is certainly nothing new, has brought large-scale conventional war back to Europe, shedding a light on important gaps, especially among Europeans,

¹ Alessandro Marrone, "Cosa aspettarsi dal nuovo Concetto strategico Nato", in *AffariInternazionali*, 23 June 2023, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98963>.

² Alessandro Marrone, "Perché il vertice Nato di Madrid è storico" [podcast], in *AffariInternazionali*, 30 June 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99117>.

³ NATO, *Strategic Concept 2010*, 19 November 2010, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

for instance in terms of the capacity of armed forces and defence industries to manage a high-intensity and long-term conventional war.

Moscow's aggression has led to the (upward) resizing of NATO's conventional forces along the Western flank. As announced in Madrid, the Alliance will increase the numbers of the Rapid Reaction Force from the current 40,000 to 300,000, however including also the capabilities that will remain stationed in their respective bases. In addition, some battlegroups deployed on the Eastern flank will be upgraded to reach the level of brigade. As highlighted by the Concept itself, and conflicting with the previous document of 2010, NATO no longer considers Moscow as a potential partner, instead stressing that Moscow represents the most direct threat to the security of allied countries as well as peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Alliance's sharp, and crucial, change in posture in Europe in fact represents a concrete sign of the commitment that NATO has decided to make in regard to the first (and most important today) core task: that of deterrence and defence.

The new Strategic Concept is characterised by the centrality of technology and thus of investment in technological innovation, also in the fields of emerging and disruptive technologies, in order to ensure the technical and technological supremacy of NATO forces in the future as well. On this point, the allied leaders officially signed an agreement that sets into motion the NATO Defence Innovation Fund, that will invest one billion euro in startups and small and medium-sized enterprises that work on emerging dual-use technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum and biotechnologies. This is closely linked to the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (Diana) already being launched, which aims to create a system of technological centres in Europe and North America to drive innovation in the Euro-Atlantic area.

One of the most anticipated elements of the Madrid summit was the official invitation to Finland and Sweden to join NATO, after months of opposition from Turkey – that ended with a memorandum of understanding between the leaders of the three countries. The future enlargement to the north strengthens the Alliance⁴ since it brings with its new armed forces that are well trained and

⁴ See Chapter 5.

equipped, and more.

A rapid glance at a map of NATO countries prior to the entry of Finland and Sweden shows that the Baltic allies (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were in a strategically precarious position, surrounded on three sides by Russia (including Kaliningrad) and Belarus, and on the fourth by the Baltic Sea, that would become a contested sea in the case of open war between Russia and NATO. A strong Alliance of Finland and Sweden would make control of the Baltic a much more practicable prospect in the case of war, effectively countering Russian naval operations and facilitating the supply of troops and NATO structures towards the Baltic countries. In Madrid there were not only presidents and prime minister of NATO countries, Sweden and Finland, and partners such as Georgia. For the first time there was the complete participation of what Secretary General Stoltenberg has defined as the “Indo-Pacific partners”: Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. This partnership is to be interpreted from an anti-China perspective, as part of a new approach toward Beijing also outlined in the Strategic Concept, which speaks of China’s “systemic challenges” to Euro-Atlantic security, and of strengthening cooperation and dialogue with regional partners.

In practice, it however remains to be seen how this line will take shape and above all how many countries will actually take significant steps to look to these new horizons in the framework of NATO, especially net of the fact that most allies (not only the smaller ones) still perceive the Indo-Pacific as a region that is very far away. Certainly, this quadrant is a priority for the United States, and increasingly for the United Kingdom also through the AUKUS agreement,⁵ and it is good for the allies to consult on China and the Indo-Pacific also in the context of NATO. Finally, despite the impression of a NATO that has sharply changed its global posture concentrating more forcefully on deterrence and collective defence, commitment also remains to crisis prevention and management, at least according to the new Strategic Concept that (contrary to the previous document, it should be stressed) gives significant emphasis to the importance of safeguarding security and stability in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel. In a context of war in Europe and of growing tensions with

⁵ Elio Calcagno, “Aukus: il fronte anglosassone nel Pacifico che esclude la Francia”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 22 September 2021, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/archivio-affarinternazionali/?p=89353>.

China, the role of the southern flank must however be measured with respect to other theatres, that at the moment remain priorities for both the Alliance and obviously for Washington.

Italy can consider itself satisfied with the language used in the new Strategic Concept with respect to a region of primary interest for the country. However, the political, military and economic capital of the Alliance will inevitably be channelled to the east and the threat from Russia. Thus, Rome must play a more proactive and concrete role on NATO's southern flank than it has until now, in order to obtain the possible results in the new strategic framework, and at the same time encourage more European action in the Greater Mediterranean, especially if it does not want to assume the role of passive spectator with respect to the prevalent dynamics at the Euro-Atlantic level.

Translation of: "Dove punta la bussola Nato", in *Affari Internazionali*, 1 luglio 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99128>.

7. Three Ways to Achieve a European Political Community

by Nicoletta Pirozzi

On 6 October 2022 in Prague, the curtain rose on the first meeting of the European Political Community (EPC). A total of 44 countries, 27 member states of the EU and 17 partner countries, including the United Kingdom and Turkey, met the day before the informal summit convened by the rotating Czech presidency of the EU Council. It was a large photo opportunity and a significant demonstration of the cohesion of the European family in the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine. There was discussion of two issues of the day, energy and security/stability. There was also a limited but tangible result, favoured by French President Macron, that is, the initiative to launch a civilian EU mission on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan to facilitate a normalisation of relations between the two countries. Lastly, there was the promise to meet again in six months in Moldova – and again six months later in the United Kingdom. In a certain sense, the result was surprising. In fact, the idea took off at an incredible speed by European standards since it was first launched by President Macron on the occasion of Europe Day on 9 May 2022. The European institutions and some European leaders, including German Chancellor Scholz, approved and promoted the initiative in recent months. The escalation of the war in Ukraine and the subsequent offer of candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, together with the need to give responses to the European citizens who expressed their preferences at the Conference on the Future of Europe, were certainly crucial accelerators. And the evolution of the political and economic situation in the post-Brexit United Kingdom contributed to convincing the new Prime Minister Liz Truss to be present at the gathering of the European family.

The promoters of the project had to clarify some key aspects and make some changes to the original plan to ensure it was attractive to the main partners. In particular, it was stated that the EPC does not substitute enlargement,

as was feared by some Western Balkan countries; it is not institutionalised, because this would have prevented the United Kingdom in particular from participating; and there is no overlap with other organisations, in particular the OSCE and the Council of Europe. This made it possible to include 44 countries in Prague. However, these clarifications are not sufficient to transform the EPC in an effective and sustainable initiative that can represent the backbone of Europe's geopolitical future. Only by clarifying its goals will it be possible to adapt the format and composition, not the contrary.

There are two principal views on the meaning of the EPC. If the idea is to create a political space to keep neighbours anchored to the EU, the lack of institutionalisation can represent a problem from two standpoints. First of all, if the EU wants to be in the driver's seat and avoid the nationalisation of the project, the Brussels institutions should play a key role in defining the agenda and guaranteeing a follow-up. Moreover, only a more direct access to European institutions can offer the partner countries added value with respect to the current forms of partnership with the EU. In this regard, some proposals have already been made, such as organising EU pre-summits expanded to the partners and creating a parliamentary forum composed of members of the European Parliament and the parliaments of the partner countries. In this scenario, the criteria for entry into the EPC should be anchored to the fundamental values of the EU, including respect for democracy and the rule of law. This would likely restrict the group. A different idea is to use the EPC to unite the European family against Russia in the attempt to address both urgent questions and worries about the long-term security for Europe. In this case, we presume that interests, more than values and shared rules, will provide a common platform. The informal intergovernmental context chosen in Prague would seem to be ideal, since it allows for maintaining a flexible format and broad participation. It is very suited to the urgency of the moment, but less convincing as a recipe for subsequent phases.

It is difficult to understand how to move beyond the initial exchange of notes on Ukraine to reach something more significant for the future of Europe. At the moment there is no clear long-term vision, and it can be anticipated that it will be a challenge to ensure the convergence of interests of 44 states and adequate follow-up without a formal structure. It is also questionable whether it is wise for the EU to sponsor an initiative on the European Continent that it

can no longer control, given that it supports the participation of all of the states on an equal footing and excludes a leading role for the EU. It is also possible to explore a third way, in which the intergovernmental approach of the EPC serves as a political forum to discuss the principal foreign policy and security issues between the EU and the partner countries, linked to the agenda of EU leadership, starting from visible and concrete projects that can be proposed and implemented by differentiated groups of members with the support of the EU institutions.

One possibility would be to begin with a “Next Generation Ukraine” package to support the resilience and future reconstruction of Ukraine. This would keep the EU in the driver’s seat, maintaining the sustainable format and inclusive adherence – even though some partners could abandon the initiative. The most important task for the EU is to develop a clear vision of the stakes at play and its own goals; without a direction, even the smartest political inventions can become a boomerang.

Translation of: “Tre vie per realizzare la Comunità politica europea”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 17 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100706>.

8. The Risks to European Defence of Non-coordination

by Michele Nones

For many years, and at least until 2018, both the process of moving towards European defence and the leading actors in that process could be depicted as a group of wayfarers crossing the desert. Some were stronger and had water supplies, while others marched almost only with the force of the will. They were all surrounded by a desert of limited political and media attention, linked above all to the widespread conviction that we would never see a real war on European territory again, and that by now “hybrid” war had substituted “traditional” war.

Despite the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, many had forgotten that this first adjective (“hybrid”) in a certain sense includes the second (“traditional”) as well, and that considering the centuries-long history of modern Europe nothing could and should have been taken for granted. On 24 February of this year, unfortunately, reality proved to be stronger than the dreams which many had rested on for so many years. It seems that the European Union and its members immediately woke up and understood that there is no development without security, and that only through serious commitment can the system of European life and values be guaranteed. Thus, shortly afterwards, water was found, with the decision to increase collective and national allocations for defence. For now, they seem to be more oasis than inexhaustible sources, not linked to each other and with very varied flows, but certainly almost everyone has been able to start to quench their thirst. It’s too bad that, as those who know the desert are aware, it is very risky to do so without caution and gradualism; the risk of indigestion is right around the corner, and is what could happen to European defence.

Leaving the metaphor, on a collective level it could have been possible to give a strong signal by doubling financing for military research and development,

thus bringing the European Defence Fund (EDF) to the level initially proposed by the Commission prior to Covid, and there could have been an increase in the funds for Military Mobility, favouring mutual support between the member states. But the worries about the need to make up for the equipment given to Ukraine and increase it given the new threats from Russia, has pushed the Union and the member states to seek to favour rapid new acquisitions of military products.¹ This choice is understandable, but somewhat short-sighted. It entails some risks that could affect Europe's actual future capabilities:

1. To satisfy current needs without a common strategic perspective means having to make use of various suppliers, most of which are not European. The result will be to still have different types of weapons for the decades to come, making it impossible to have common logistical support, training and technological updating, in addition to making common operational deployment more difficult. It also means weakening European technological sovereignty, penalising EU internal suppliers and favouring global competitors, on whom Europe will continue to depend for decades, considering that the average life of a military platform is estimated to be thirty years.
2. Excessively saturating demand with products that are modern, but not new-generation (such as those available today) means sentencing the Union to coexist for decades with the technological gap in regard to the United States, that on the other hand are launching a new generational leap in many sectors. This gap could also be reflected on the international market, limiting European export possibilities.
3. Anticipating the acquisition of important defence systems to the short to medium term means creating risks for the production of what will be made possible by European development projects financed by common funds, in particular the EDF. Technological innovation cannot do without the maturation linked to the industrialisation and entry into service of new equipment. But this cannot take place before the end of the current decade.

¹ Michele Nones, "L'Europa della difesa fa un altro passo avanti", in *AffariInternazionali*, 23 May 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98205>.

In an attempt to favour a common approach to short-term needs,² the European Union is preparing a new incentive programme, named EDIRPA, with resources of 500 million euro. But this is only a drop in the ocean of the new acquisition programmes that in the current two-year period could be one hundred times greater.³ In any event, it can be useful to give a sign of the European intention to continue on the road of cooperation in the field of acquisitions as well. But this requires a change of pace, because the true actors remain the member states,⁴ and without political will on their part we will not get very far. Regarding this decision, the armed forces and industry must also do their part, by helping governments to understand that the need to have common equipment remains an essential objective if the aim is to truly guarantee greater defence and security capabilities for our continent. Operational efficiency, logistics support, training and technological updating require common requirements, and therefore common weapons systems. The increase of investments by member states can bring us closer to this goal, but also take us farther away, perhaps irreparably.

A “virtuous” experience, from this point of view, took place in Italy in the past. From the beginning our country enthusiastically joined the Eurofighter programme in 1985. It would then take twenty years before the Air Force received the first plane. In the meantime, the training and operational capabilities were satisfied first by modifying a group of F104 plans (the ASA - Weapons Systems Update – version), then leasing for a decade starting in the mid-1990s a group of Tornado ADV fighters (Air Defence Variant, the air superiority version developed for the RAF), and ultimately substituting them with the lease of a group of F-16s, that remained in service until 2012. The far-sighted choice by Italy and its Air Force was thus to maintain commitment and support to the programme that allowed for creating one of the best European systems, currently in service in Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain and other EU and non-EU countries, partially satisfying immediate needs, with a considerable financial sacrifice. This is an example that could be followed today

² Vincenzo Camporini et al., “Per affrontare la minaccia russa gli europei devono investire insieme”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 21 April 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=97388>.

³ Elio Calcagno and Michelangelo Freyrie, “Cosa sapere della svolta tedesca su difesa e sicurezza”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 31 May 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98394>.

⁴ Elio Calcagno, “Gli aerei di sesta generazione frammentano la difesa europea”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 17 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100508>.

also by other European partners, with the necessary adjustments, following the logic of not clipping the wings of future common systems.

Another path to explore could be that of the greater effort in supporting member states through specific cooperation agreements that allow for performing certain tasks, making use of the capabilities of other member states through European funding. It could then be possible to extend and stabilise until necessary the re-deployment or certain military capabilities in the countries that need it, as already partially takes place in the framework of NATO. The mechanism should be revisited from a European perspective, including financially, and aimed at not jeopardising the prospects for participation in future European programmes by interested member states.

In other words, it is essentially about ensuring a stable presence in Eastern Europe of Western European military assets, to reassure those states for the time necessary to produce the new generation of common assets, thus slowing down the race to buy “off-the-shelf systems from American, Israeli, or Korean suppliers. It is certainly a complicated path, but one that could contribute to responding to the worries of today without sacrificing those of tomorrow.

Translation of: “I rischi di una difesa europea troppo accelerata” in *AffariInternazionali*, 20 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100861>.

9. Where Italy Invests on Defence

by Ottavia Credi

Like every year, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) presented the Multiyear Programmatic Document (“DPP”) for 2022–2024 to the Italian Parliament.¹ In 256 pages, the document presents a schedule of spending anticipated for the period in question, in line with last year’s Budget Law, and the projects on which the Ministry is working and will work in the coming years. The Russian invasion of Ukraine represented a decisive factor to define the strategies and priorities of Italian defence, contained in the DPP.² While on the one hand the conflict has highlighted the need to develop a cutting-edge military tool in all five operational domains, on the other it has stressed the importance of Rome’s collaboration at the both the NATO level and in the context of the European Union, in part through Italian efforts in international missions.³

For the year 2022, the overall investments in the defence sector amount to approximately 26 billion euro, equal to 1.38 per cent of GDP (a slight drop compared to 1.41 per cent in 2021). The spending foreseen for 2023 and 2024 does not deviate much from the sum anticipated for the current year, but marks a reduction of the budget of approximately 24.5 and 25 billion euro, respectively. Among the main factors that have determined the definition of defence spending for the three-year period of 2022–2024, for example, is a reworking of the spending for (civilian and military) personnel in the field of defence, the refinancing of the “Safe Streets” Operation,⁴ and the creation of a

¹ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Documento programmatico pluriennale della Difesa per il triennio 2022-2024*, 2022, https://www.difesa.it/II_Ministro/Documents/Dpp_2022_2024.pdf.

² Alessandro Marrone, “La guerra lunga e l’inverno in arrivo per l’Europa”, cit.

³ Michelangelo Freyrie, “Le missioni italiane all’estero oltre il ‘focus europeo’”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 22 July 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99496>.

⁴ On the usefulness (or lack thereof) of continuing “Secure Streets”, see: Michele Nones, “Operazione “Strade Sicure”: ad ognuno il proprio compito”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 25 April 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=97487>.

fund for financing assets destined to high and very high operating readiness. The document underscores the need for an increase in the defence budget, not only in order to reach the famous level of 2 per cent of GDP destined to this sector:⁵ a goal that the 2022 Directive for National Military Policy sets to be reached by the end of 2028,⁶ but towards which no progress is planned in the next two years. In line with the Directive, the document identifies four strategic priorities for 2022–2024: promote a suitable positioning of Italy in the international security context; incentivise the activity of the national defence industry and its positioning with respect to the European and international market; favour the definition of policies for defence personnel that facilitates the development of specific skills; and ensure the country has an “always modern, sustainable, technologically uniform and strongly integrated” military instrument. To facilitate the reaching of the last goal, the DPP confirms the Ministry’s intention to establish a National Intervention Force by 2026 able to operate in every operational domain.

The financial programming process is divided into four different functions: Territorial Security Function, External Functions, Provisional Pensions for auxiliary personnel and Defence Function. The last of these, that includes all of the spending necessary to perform the institutional duties of the Armed Forces, is allocated approximately 18.1 billion euro. That figure is divided among the three key sectors of personnel, operations and investments. For the year 2022, expectations are for spending of approximately 10.6 billion euro for personnel (58.6 per cent), 2.1 billion euro for operations (11.4 per cent) and 5.4 billion euro in investments (30 per cent). This data allows us to see that, while spending for personnel has remained more or less unchanged compared to the previous year (with an increase of only 1.1 per cent), a significant increase in investments in defence is anticipated (+30 per cent over 2021), that goes hand in hand with a significant drop in operating expenses (-9.4 per cent).⁷ This drop seems to be destined to intensify in the coming years, with approximately 1.9 billion euro in

⁵ Ottavia Credi and Alessandro Marrone, “La Difesa riporta l’attenzione sugli investimenti”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 20 October 2020, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/archivio-affarinternazionali/?p=85076>.

⁶ Italian Ministry of Defence, *Direttiva per la Politica militare nazionale 2022*, May 2022, https://www.difesa.it/Il_Ministro/Documents/Direttiva%20PMN%202022.pdf.

⁷ Elio Calcagno, “Difesa 2021-2023: cyber, spazio e slancio interforze”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 17 August 2021, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/archivio-affarinternazionali/?p=89089>.

operating spending foreseen in 2023 and 1.8 in 2024.

With 170 programmes underway and 46 planned to be launched, the Ministry intends to carry forward 216 activities in the 2022–2024 period. Among those currently in operation, particular significance is held by the refinancing of the Tempest programme with approximately 1.8 billion euro, for the realisation of a sixth-generation fighter – an activity considered to be of strategic value for the MoD, thanks to the possibilities offered in the areas of industrial cooperation inside and outside of the European Union. Among the programmes scheduled to be launched, the largest investments are seen in the Army and Navy. A sum of approximately 1.8 billion euro is addressed to renewal of the armoured weapons system, for the development of a new infantry combat system. The MoD considers this programme advantageous for the creation of opportunities for the development of the Future Tank, that will substitute the Ariete model by 2034, and the relative derived platforms.

The Navy, on the other hand, will see the development of new amphibious units aimed at improving the capability of the armed forces to project from the sea, with a planned investment of approximately 1.2 billion. There is also a significant modernisation of on-board systems for EH101 helicopters, with a value of 1 billion euro. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has also underscored the integration of military operations in the cybernetic and space domains, together with traditional land, naval and air operations. The DPP reaffirms the possibility, for an enemy country or non-state group, to provoke serious problems to the cybernetic network of a state, and to conduct destabilisation and disinformation campaigns aimed at conditioning public opinion. Thus, the MoD intends to obtain capabilities that allow it to operate along the entire cyber warfare spectrum, that are consistent and interoperable with allied systems. To that end, the DPP makes 90 million euro available for activities in the cyber sector.

The resources for the space domain will be more than tripled, a domain with strategic value, that is strictly linked to the issue of the missile threat. In fact, in the DPP there is a warning regarding hypersonic technologies, considered able to considerably influence international stability. The MoD's goal thus includes the upgrading of capabilities for access and conduct of space operations in order to guarantee adequate protection for national assets.

Translation of: “Dove investe la Difesa italiana”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 27 July 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99572>.

10. Conclusions

Where Is European Security Going?

by Alessandro Marrone

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war entail a series of long-term effects for European security and stability, the role of NATO and the EU, and thus the strategic picture for the foreign and defence policy of a middle-sized power such as Italy – themes that on October 27 were at the centre of the IAI conference “European Security and Defence: Quo Vadis?”

Many have stressed that the unprovoked aggression against a sovereign and peaceful state, with a large-scale and high-intensity war underway for nine months, represents in and of itself a challenge to the international liberal order¹ – centred precisely on the Euro-Atlantic area – on a scale not seen since 1945. In fact, even the Soviet repressions in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were to support existing regimes in those states that were already part of the Warsaw Pact, and not an invasion tout court such as that underway since 24 February of this year. The Russia-Ukraine war is thus an epicentre of a renewed global clash between democracies and authoritarianism,² that sees on the one hand a Western bloc led by the United States from the Indo-Pacific to the Dnieper, and on the other the global power China and the regional power Russia drawing closer as standard bearers of the authoritarian alternative. Not a cold war, but one with dramatic fighting, that makes it difficult, but not impossible, to think of peaceful coexistence between the groups of rivals – democracies and authoritarian states – situated in the geopolitical space that goes from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

¹ Riccardo Alcaro, “La guerra russo-ucraina oltre il punto di non ritorno”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 2 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100347>.

² Nathalie Tocci and Alberto Anfossi, “Podcast: la governance globale dopo la guerra all’Ucraina”, in *AffariInternazionali*, 8 July 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=99269>.

That space has entered a third phase with respect to post-World War II history. First the Cold War saw NATO and the Warsaw Pact face off in conventional and nuclear terms on the two sides of the iron curtain between Stettin and Trieste and the Berlin Wall. In the post-Cold War phase, the free choice of the peoples of Central-Eastern Europe, the weakness of Moscow, and the Western opening led to NATO and EU membership expanding to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. At the same time, the United States and Europe sought to establish a partnership with the Russian Federation, and with all of the former Soviet and neutral states east of Vienna. This effort resulted in the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council during the historic summit at Pratica di Mare in 2002, and in a range of Western partnerships towards the East. Vladimir Putin was long considered a partner by NATO and the EU, by Democratic and Republican presidents, European heads of state and government – even after Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, that did not lead to the expulsion of Russia from the G8, which instead took place in 2014 with the invasion of Crimea. The current Russia-Ukraine war definitively marks the closing of this second phase of relations between NATO countries and the Russian Federation.

This a third phase of confrontation has begun, with contours and characteristics that are still being defined. With the series of accessions to NATO that culminated with the historic decision of Finland and Sweden,³ the *limes* between the West and Moscow is now much further east than in 1989, directly touching the internationally recognised Russian borders from Scandinavia to Kaliningrad. A mechanism of decoupling of European economies from the Russian economy has been triggered, with sanctions destined to last and a re-orientation of energy supplies of a structural nature that will influence the position of the entire continent, and of Germany and Italy in particular. Furthermore, the military, political and diplomatic support for Kyiv from the Euro-Atlantic world is unprecedented, even compared to US aid for Afghan combatants who fought the Soviet invaders in the 1980s. Today NATO, the EU and the single member states of both organisations – as well as other democracies in the Western camp – publicly support Ukraine in the war with Russia, in multiple ways, despite not becoming co-belligerents in the current conflict.

3 See Chapter 5.

The third phase of relations between the West and Russia entails a level of commitment, joint responsibility and uncertainty for Europe in regard to Moscow that may be higher than during the Cold War, especially after the gamble of offering Ukraine the prospect of joining the EU.⁴

In fact, the clash with Russia is indeed uniting NATO in the face of a direct and immanent threat for all of its members, pushing the Greater Mediterranean area to the background,⁵ where the interests between allies diverge; but this does not remove the fact that for the United States the main adversary is and remains China, and thus Europeans will have to do more for defence of their continent also inside the Atlantic Alliance. The scenario in which most of US conventional armed forces could be deployed in defence of Taiwan is something that the Europeans must take into serious consideration in terms of military capabilities, investments and planning. When it comes to the EU, the Russia-Ukraine war marks a watershed and poses an unprecedented security challenge. The civil wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the terrorist attacks in the cities of the Union in 2000 and 2010, the destabilisation of North Africa and the Middle East from 2011 on, and also the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, spurred the Union to adopt a common security and defence policy, but only to a certain point. The EU as such, its energy security and economic and socio-political stability, have in some way been able to adapt to the deterioration of the regional security context, coexists with it and in a certain sense ignore it, such as in Libya and Syria.

A lasting and structural confrontation with Moscow, despite the fact that Russia today is much weaker than the Soviet Union ever was during the Cold War, is something quite different. Something that through inflation and the risk to energy supplies⁶ directly (and deliberately) affects the stability of the European socio-economic model, and thus of national and EU political institutions. This is something that translates into a latent risk in all domains, from cyber, where the war takes place 24 hours a day, to space, where it is an integral part of the conflict,⁷ passing through the sabotage of gas pipelines in the Baltic and the

⁴ Alessandro Marrone, "Pericoli e svantaggi dell'adesione ucraina all'Ue", in *Affari Internazionali*, 16 June 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=98824>.

⁵ See Chapter 6.

⁶ Alessandro Marrone, "La guerra lunga e l'inverno in arrivo per l'Europa", cit.

⁷ See Chapter 2.

threatening presence of the Russian navy in the Mediterranean.⁸ It is something that has a strong nuclear dimension, not only in terms of accidents,⁹ but of a possible atomic escalation and thus of deterrence to avoid it.¹⁰

In other words, this is a full spectrum challenge for European security. It is a challenge to be met through different types of policies – foreign, neighbourhood, energy, trade, industrial, technology, and so on – including defence policy, obviously. On this last point, the Strategic Compass adopted by the EU in March does indeed represent an important step forward,¹¹ but it remains a good compromise document for times of peace, rather than the necessary boost in times of war.

Such a boost is currently underway above all in investments at the national level by some European countries – Germany,¹² France and Poland – but not in a coordinated, collective and effective manner in terms of EU. Paradoxically, the gap between the asymmetric accelerations of single states and the slowness as the Union represents an additional risk for the construction of European defence,¹³ leading to national divergences and duplications, when what is more urgent is to revive European cooperation and integration in this sector as well. The Russia-Ukraine war is a turning point for defence in Europe, but in what direction is not clear yet.

Translation of: “Dove va la sicurezza europea?”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 24 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100917>.

⁸ See Chapter 4.

⁹ See Chapter 3.

¹⁰ Stefano Silvestri, “L’escalation di Putin in nome del regime”, in *Affari Internazionali*, 10 October 2022, <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/?p=100550>.

¹¹ Elio Calcagno, Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones, “La Bussola strategica Ue e dodici sfide per l’Italia”, in *Documenti IAI*, No. 22|06 (June 2022), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/15558>.

¹² Elio Calcagno and Michelangelo Freyre, “Cosa sapere della svolta tedesca su difesa e sicurezza”, cit.

¹³ See Chapter 8.

Acronyms

Asa	Aggiornamento sistemi d'arma
A2/AD	Anti access / area denial
Diana	Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic
DPP	Documento programmatico pluriennale
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDIRPA	European Defence Industry through Common Procurement Act
EPC	European political Community
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GPS	Global positioning system
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
MoD	Ministry of Defence
RAF	Royal Air Force
SatCen	European Satellite Centre
SIGINT	Signal Intelligence
VMF	Voyenno-Morskoi Flot

The Russia-Ukraine War, Security in Europe and European Defence

The ongoing conflict since 24 February 2022 has shown strengths and weaknesses of the two warring sides, and in light of these factors, several scenarios are currently possible including the liberation of Ukrainian territories occupied by Moscow. The conflict also had a significant spatial dimension, and led to the disruption of important cooperation in space between Russia and the West. The war also carries a dual atomic risk: that of escalation with Russian use of tactical nuclear weapons, and that of an accident at the Zaporizhzhia power plant. The conflict brought a number of structural changes to the European strategic framework, primarily the entry of Finland and Sweden into NATO that strengthen the Atlantic Alliance and shift its centre of gravity to the northeast. The Strategic Concept approved in June by the Madrid summit enshrines a NATO focused primarily on collective defence against the Russian threat. At the same time, the European Political Community took its first steps with the Prague summit, attended by 44 European countries including 27 EU members. Within the Union, however, initiatives for defence cooperation and integration could be disadvantaged by a sudden and uncoordinated increase in national military investment for the benefit of non-EU suppliers.



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